

**Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities  
Wednesday, February 17, 2016 from 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.  
Prairie Room - Prairie Hills Plaza  
1237 W. Divide Ave., Bismarck, ND**

**Members Present**

Tina Bay  
LouAnn Nider  
Eric Wittliff (by phone)

Vickay Gross  
Paul Vardanega

Chad Kourajian  
Ryan Volk

**Members Absent**

Bruce Murry

Gerry Teevens

**Others Present**

Russ Cusack  
Melissa Naslund (by phone)

Cheryl Anderson

Michele Burney (by phone)

**Roll Call**

Interim Chairperson Vickay Gross called the meeting to order and introductions were made.

**Approval of Agenda**

**Action:** A motion was made by LouAnn Nider and seconded by Ryan Volk to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

**Approval of December 2015 Minutes**

**Action:** A motion was made by Chad Kourajian and seconded by Tina Bay to approve the December 2015 minutes. Motion carried.

**Call for Additional Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair  
Voting for Chair and Vice Chair**

There were no additional nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. Bruce Murry and Gerry Teevens were not in attendance to accept the nominations for Chair and Vice Chair respectively. Voting will be tabled for the next meeting. Vickay Gross agreed to serve as the Interim Chair for the May 2016 meeting.

**Project Updates**

- **Expanded Supported Employment** - Cheryl Anderson provided background information pertaining to the pilot project. MSU was contracted to coordinate technical assistance through WISE. WISE provided training in December for providers, counselors, and others who work with Supported Employment. WISE also provided a two day onsite visit in February with Pride and HIT. The training sessions for KALIX and Community Living Services will be held in April. Providers are encouraged to use their technical assistance hours.

The Expanded Supported Employment pilot project will run for three years through November 2018 and will involve approximately 60 individuals receiving Supported Employment services from KALIX, Pride, HIT, and CLS. What is learned from the project will help the state as a system to look at policies that need to be changed or implemented to make the Expanded Supported Employment program more successful. It is also hoped through this project that other providers will benefit in helping these individuals become successful in finding employment.

- **Employment Survey by NDCPD** - Melissa Naslund provided an update. Two trainings were held last week with approximately 40 attendees. Two additional trainings will be offered - one live training and one recorded training with Melissa presenting. The recorded training will be placed on the web page. A link to the recorded training will be included when the survey link, training manual, and worksheet are sent. Data collection will begin in the next few weeks.

Melissa will email the training manual to members of the Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. She will have a draft presentation and report for the May committee meeting. Committee members are welcome to email her at [melissa.naslund@minotstateu.edu](mailto:melissa.naslund@minotstateu.edu) with questions or concerns.

### **Strategic Work Plan Discussion**

General discussion was held on the purpose of this Committee and how to proceed with developing a strategic work plan. Russ discussed the following work in progress in North Dakota to promote the employment of people with disabilities, including:

- VR is contracting with school districts throughout the state to provide pre-employment transition services, assisting students who have disabilities or who are “potentially eligible” to make the transition from school to postsecondary education programs and into competitive employment.
- VR is also contracting with two other providers, one for parent education and another for assistive technology in rural districts that do not have an AT specialist in their schools.
- The Expanded Supported Employment Pilot Project is in progress.
- VR is working with DD partners, providers, and stakeholders to develop changes in the payment methodology for the DD waiver which includes extended services.
- The Employment Survey administered by NDCPD will make information available to providers and employers on people with disabilities.
- Business representatives in the regional VR offices will get the word out to local chambers and businesses that VR wants to be their talent pool.

North Dakota currently has the highest percentage in the nation of individuals with disabilities in the work force.

### **New Business**

#### **Public Comment Meeting on Revised Statewide Transition Plan**

A public comment meeting for the revised statewide transition plan is scheduled for February 19 to review changes made to the initial statewide transition plan. Vickay

brought the news release with meeting particulars. Tina provided background information on the work involved in the revisions. The goal is that everyone has the opportunity to be integrated into the community.

**Committee Membership Terms Expire**

Chad Kourajian, Paul Vardanega, and Eric Wittliff's three year committee membership terms expire in July 2016. Nominations for these positions will be an agenda item for the May meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2016, from 8:30 a.m. - noon.

**Action: A motion was made by Chad Kourajian and seconded by Tina Bay to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 a.m.